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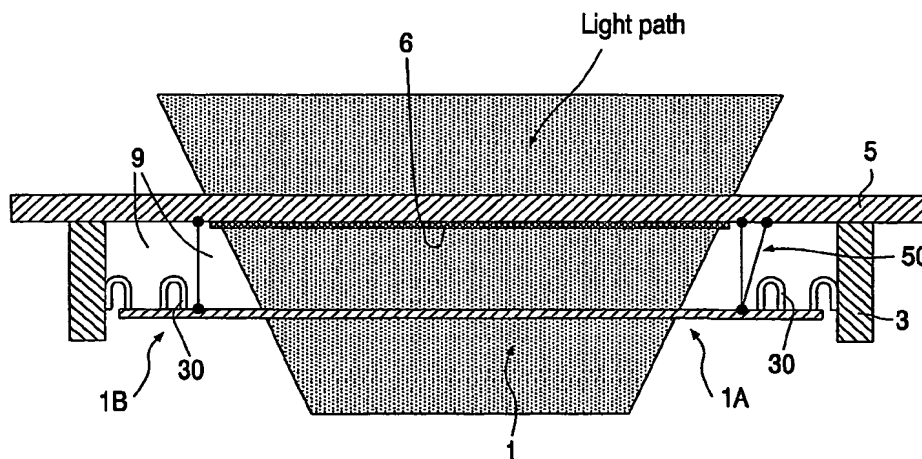
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROTECTING A RETICLE USED IN CHIP PRODUCTION FROM CONTAMINATION**



(57) Abstract: A transparent pellicle member (1), comprising an inner or central portion (1A) and an out peripheral portion (1B) mounted across a reticle for use in semiconductor chip fabrication, substantially parallel thereto and with a space (9) therebetween. The central portion (1A) of the pellicle (1) is fixed with regard to position and tilt angle to the reticle base plate (5) by means of one or more anchors (50). The outer or peripheral portion (1B) of the pellicle (1) is separate from the central portion (1A). It is connected on each side to the central portion (1A) and to a frame (3) by means of flexible connectors (30), which are sufficiently flexible to permit movement of the peripheral portion (1B) of the pellicle membrane in a direction perpendicular to the reticle, but is sufficiently resistant to movement thereof in other directions. As a result, the gas pressure difference between the space (9) and the surrounding atmosphere supports the outer portion (1B) of the pellicle (1) using the weight of that portion of the pellicle (1) itself. As a result of the "floating" portion (113), a pressure difference is created which is required to avoid deflection of the inner portion (1A).



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